

issue the office has put a lot of time and effort into.

Everyone who knew Joe well knew that he could be stubborn at times—stubborn in a way you don't often find in his generation; the kind of stubbornness that stems from deep integrity and a willingness to fight for what he believed was right.

It was this same quality that drove him to keep working even during the toughest hours of his fight against cancer. Even on the most challenging days, Joe would come in to the office ready to work, and work hard. We practically had to order him home to rest up. Joe had an uncommon drive and commitment to public service.

Joe had an infectious smile and a great personality. Everyone loved being with him and he was always setting up office outings for the staff. In small Hill offices, where everyone attended different schools, there are friendly rivalries, particularly among Virginia schools.

Joe was part of the JMU mafia in the office, which at one point outnumbered all the staff from other Virginia schools and they never let anyone forget that, especially that JMU once beat Virginia Tech in football. Joe was proud to be a JMU Duke and volunteered with the JMU Alumni Association and the JMU Politicos, the school's Capitol Hill networking group.

Joe loved to eat, and for a little guy he could eat. He holds the office record for eating six giant glazed donuts in one day. One of his going away presents was donuts.

Joe also valued public service, which led him to take the next step in his career: law school. Although we missed him after he left our office this summer, we were so proud of him for getting into University of South Carolina. He pursued his dream of law school, daring to envision a future even when so much was uncertain about the present.

I want to read from parts of an email Joe sent to the staff on his last day in the office this summer:

"I just wanted to say thank you to all of you one more time. It has truly been an honor and privilege to work with all of you. I have learned so much working with all of you over the past three years and each of you have encouraged me and taught me lessons that I will never forget. I think it is important for all of us to remember how blessed we are to have the opportunity to serve our country. I know it's hard to remember that on a daily basis but that is truly what you are doing when you work for a member of Congress. You are serving the people of your community and you ARE making a huge difference.

"... My time on Capitol Hill has also taught me that many people are really cynical and believe that all politicians are corrupt. "It's easy to reach a point where you think that it's too hard to enact real change or get the big things done. But this is a mentality I think we should try to suppress. If you believe in something and you want to enact change, then get in there and fight for what you believe in. That's what public service is all about. If you think you have good ideas that can help people, don't be afraid to fight for them. Don't let the weekly scandal or negative news story discourage you from trying to help people or make a difference in your country."

Joe wanted to make a difference. And he did. But it was a life cut painfully short. Joe was a man of faith and scripture tells us

In Ecclesiastes 7:2

"For death is the destiny of every man the living should take this to heart."

We here today should take it to heart.

In Psalm 103:15, King David said:

"As for man, his days are like grass. He flourishes like a flower of the field, the wind

blows over and it is gone and its place remembers no more."

It's apparent even as the cancer attacked his body, that Joe's soul was strengthened by his faith in Jesus, a faith which only grew in the face of circumstance that would dictate otherwise. In an e-mail to a staff member before leaving last summer he wrote:

"There is no way I could have gotten through my bout with cancer had I not had a foundation in Christ. Reading my Bible was the one thing that gave me hope and encouragement when I was in pain and sick."

We grieve Joe's passing but we celebrate his life and know he has entered eternal life with his savior and Lord. Our goal should be to live a life of faith so that we can one day join Joe in the House of our Heavenly Father.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, on December 17, 2012, I was attending to a sick friend and comforting his family and was unable to vote on rollcall vote 628.

If present, I would have voted "yea" on S. 3193.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I did not return to Washington in time on Monday December 17, 2012 and missed two votes.

Had I been present I would have voted "yes" on H.R. 4606—To authorize the issuance of right-of-way permits for natural gas pipelines in Glacier National Park, and for other purposes (rollcall 627), "yes" on S. 3193—To make technical corrections to the legal description of certain land to be held in trust for the Barona Band of Mission Indians, and for other purposes (rollcall 628).

RECOGNIZING COLONEL ROBERT M. WALTERMEYER

HON. CHRISTOPHER P. GIBSON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Colonel Robert M. Waltemeyer of the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO), who will retire from the United States Army on January 11, 2013 after thirty years of distinguished service.

Colonel Waltemeyer was commissioned as an Infantry Officer in 1983. In 1987 he entered Special Forces (SF) and commanded his first SF detachment in Bad Toelz, Germany, where he implemented and supported operations throughout Southwest Asia, Western and Eastern Europe, and Africa. From 1997–2003 he commanded the 2nd Battalion 10th Special Forces Group where he conducted operations

throughout the Balkans. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Colonel Waltemeyer led the United States European Command's first war on terrorism mission through the Georgian Train and Equip Mission. In 2003 Colonel Waltemeyer conducted unconventional warfare operations in Northern Iraq, employing Kurdish, Christian and Arab militias to create a northern front in advance of Operation Iraqi Freedom. From 2003–2005, he served on the Joint Staff before taking command of United States Army Garrison Japan from 2006–2009. Upon leaving Japan Colonel Waltemeyer served as the Director of International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) Regional Command South's Joint Border Coordination Center in Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, where he led a combined staff comprised of United States, Afghan, and Pakistani military and security personnel.

Throughout his thirty years of service to the nation, Colonel Waltemeyer has earned numerous awards and decorations to include: Combat Infantryman's Badge, Expert Infantryman's Badge, Special Forces and Ranger Tabs, Master Parachutists Wings, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

I am proud to share in the celebration of Colonel Waltemeyer's military career. I would also like to congratulate his wife, Ramona, and his two children, Carrie and Sam, whose love and support has aided and strengthened Colonel Waltemeyer as he has served our great nation. I wish him all the best in his retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF DOYLE EDWARD CONNER, SR.

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and service of Doyle Edward Conner, Sr. Throughout his long and distinguished career in politics, Doyle Connor served the people of Florida for 40 years in both the Florida House of Representatives and as the Commissioner of Agriculture. Commissioner Conner served as a mentor and an inspiration to countless individuals throughout the state. All of Florida mourns the loss of a great man and unparalleled public servant.

Commissioner Conner was a fourth-generation farmer who grew up learning the value of hard work on his family's farm in Starke, Florida where he helped raise cattle, grow strawberries and cut timber. Commissioner Conner was a born leader, and he was active in his community from a very young age. He participated in his local 4-H club and eventually became president of the Alachua County branch of 4-H. In 1947, he graduated from high school and enrolled at the University of Florida where he became involved in the Future Farmers of America (FFA), serving as the president of FFA at both the state and national levels.

In 1950, while still a 21-year-old student at the University of Florida, Commissioner Conner was elected to the Florida House of Representatives. Despite his youth, he quickly established himself as a serious and committed statesman who was respected by his